

Dear Sir/Madam,

In the forthcoming Milford town vote on March 11th, the town's Conservation Commission requests the authorization of the town residents for Articles 23 & 24.

Article 23 is for the appropriation of \$20,000 for the Land Fund (less than \$4 on the average annual property tax bill). In part through the efforts of the volunteers on the Conservation Commission, with the Land Fund as a vital tool, in excess of 1000 acres of land in the town have been safeguarded over the years for landscape, natural conservation and public recreation, either through purchase or through conservation easements. Trails have been maintained and improved, and outreach conducted to encourage residents to take advantage of this free leisure resource.

The Land Fund is a 'rolling' fund i.e. monies accumulate from year to year (unless spent). The fund currently stands at \$41,721. While an appreciable sum, it is still relatively modest when compared to that required to execute land or easement purchases, and restricts pursuit of any land protection opportunities that might arise in the coming year. It should also be noted that while the tough economy does put pressure on the town budget, it also means land prices are cheaper; when the economy picks up prices will rise considerably, making land protection more difficult.

The second Article (#24), has no cost (\$0) and requests permission to place a 'Conservation Easement' on Mile Slip Town Forest. The town voters overwhelmingly approved the purchase of this 452 acre forested property in 2005, and designated it a Town Forest in 2006. This forest is the closest to 'Wilderness' we have in Milford, particularly as it directly connects to 7000 acres of undeveloped land in adjoining towns. Such large blocks unfragmented by development are ecologically valuable but increasingly uncommon in Southern NH. Placing a Conservation Easement on Mile Slip will ensure its protection from development in perpetuity, conserving its natural and recreational value and beauty for future generations of town's people.

The townspeople have been very generous in supporting such requests in years past. We hope they will once again vote to approve the Articles so the Commission may continue to be effective in protecting the rural character, enhancing property values and improving the quality of life for our town's residents.

Sincerely,

The Milford Conservation Commission